

Message Text

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ACTION EB-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 AID-05

CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-01 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00

XMB-02 OPIC-03 CIEP-01 LAB-01 SIL-01 OMB-01 PA-01

PRS-01 USIA-06 INT-05 GSA-01 IGA-01 /071 W

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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 473

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMESBASSY KINGSTON

AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 1903

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV GY

SUBJECT: GOG PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST REYNOLDS FOCUSES ON DECISION
TO LAYOFF WORKERS

REF: GEORGETOWN 1854

1. WEEKEND PRESS.HVVJFRBE OF REYNOLDS TA/NATIONALIZATION ISSUE
FOCUSED ON REYNOLDS DECISION TO LAYOFF 428 BAUXITE WORKERS, ROUGHLY
40 PERCENT OF TOTAL WORK FORCE, EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 28. GOVT OWNED
CHRONICLE (SUNDAY 10/20) QUOTED SENIOR OFFICIAL OF MINISTRY OF
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES WHO DESCRIBED REYNOLDS MOVE AS
ATTEMPT
TO QUOTE VICTIMIZE INNOCENT WORKERS AND TO BRING PRESSURE TO BEAR
ON A DISPUTE WITH THE GOVT OF GUYANA UNQUOTE. ACCORDING TO MINIS-
TRY OFFICIAL, LAYOFFS ARE QUOTE PART OF DELIBERATE MANEUVER BY
REYNOLDS METALS COMPANY TO ABANDON THEIR OPERATION IN GUYANA IN
SUCH A WAY AS TO HOPEFULLY QUALIFY THEM FOR OPIC INSURANCE
UNQUOTE.

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2. MONDAY PRESS CARRIED STORIES OF RESOLUTION BY GUYANA MINE WORKERS UNION PROTESTING REYNOLDS DECISION. GMWU PRESIDENT WINSTON VERBEKE CONDEMNED REYNOLDS MOVE AS QUOTE HOSTILE ACT OF INTIMIDATION UNQUOTE AND QUOTE SLAP TO WORKERS, UNION AND GOVT UNQUOTE.

3. MEANWHILE, OTHER PRESS STORIES REPEAT TO POINT OF BOREDOM USUAL ATTACKS ON REYNOLDS AND RESOLUTIONS OF SUPPORT FOR GOVT FROM TOWN COUNCILS, CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE, WORKERS GROUPS, AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS. INVARIABLY, THEMES ARE GUYANA'S RIGHT TO DO ANYTHING NECESSARY TO OBTAIN FAIR SHARE OF REYNOLDS PROFITS AND NEED TO BE ALERT AGAINST GUYANA'S ENEMIES (IMPLIEDLY OR SPECIFICALLY USG AND MULTI-NATIONALS) WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO UNDERMINE GOG'S EFFORTS. NEW NATION, WEEKLY PAPER OF RULING PEOPLE'S NATIONAL CONGRESS, GAVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO COMMENTS OF STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN ON REYNOLDS SITUATION AS REPORTED IN WASHINGTON STAR NEWS (OCTOBER 6) AND CITED THEM AS EVIDENCE OF NORTH AMERICAN PRESSURE.

4. ALSO ATTRACTING PRESS COVEFAGE WAS ARRIVAL OF OPIC CONSULTANT ENGINEERS. MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES PRESS RELEASE DESCRIBED PURPOSE OF THEIR VISIT AS EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT, ON BEHALF OF OPIC, OF VALUE OF REYNOLDS OPERATIONS IN GUYANA. RELEASE MENTIONED THAT OPIC CONSULTANTS WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY GUYANESE OBSERVERS BUT EMPHASIZED THAT THIS IS NOT JOINT GOG-OPIC EXERCISE, NOR GOG ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF REYNOLDS RIGHT TO MAKE OPIC CLAIM, NOR ACCEPTANCE OF ANY VALUATION OF REYNOLDS ASSETS THAT CONSULTANTS MIGHT MAKE.

5. COMMENT: ATTENTION GIVEN TO LAYOFF OF WORKERS SUGGESTS THAT GOG MAY USE LAYOFFS AS PRETENSE FOR ASSUMING FURTHER CONTROL OVER REYNOLDS OPERATION. GOG WILL, OF COURSE, USE PRESS, MOST OF WHICH IT NOW CONTROLS, TO MAKE REYNOLDS DECISION APPEAR AS DELIBERATELY MALICIOUS ACT UNRELATED TO GOG DECISION TO PROHIBIT REYNOLDS FROM EXPORTING CALCINED OR CHEMICAL GRADE BAUXITE. DESPITE PRESS CAMPAIGN, WE STILL HAVE NO RPT NO INDICATION THAT WORKERS OR ANY OTHER MAJOR GROUP THUS FAR REALLY EXCITED OR INCENSED OVER TAX AND NATIONALIZATION ISSUE.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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